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worn quotations, gathered from authors whose bias he himself remarks. Bacher's works on the "Agada" do not seem to have been used at all.

Like many dissertators, Dr. Proost compels the reader to accompany him through his investigation, conducting us into blind alleys to point triumphantly at the very bottom to the sign "No Thoroughfare." In a great part of the volume we recognize that we are only reading revised note-books, excerpts and analyses, criticisms and observations, which have never been digested or assimilated.

For a *specimen eruditio[n]is* there is an extraordinary number of misprints in the Greek; and some suspicion falls on the rabbinical erudition of a scholar who does not know what the Hebrew equivalents for "this world," "the world to come," are.

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THE EPISTLE OF PRIESTHOOD: STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.  
ALEXANDER NAIRNE. T. & T. Clark. 1913. Pp. 446.

The Professor of Hebrew in King's College, London, is the latest of many distinguished Old Testament scholars who have been attracted to the study of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Professor Nairne, however, while he makes excellent use of his special knowledge of the Old Testament background, is more concerned with the permanent religious message of the Epistle than with its treatment of Jewish ritual. The book is divided into two independent sections: (1) a discussion of the teaching of the Epistle, taken as a whole; (2) a detailed exposition, following the order of the chapters. This arrangement has several advantages; but the argument of Hebrews might have been set forth in truer perspective if the general discussion had gone hand in hand with regular exposition.

As regards the critical question, Professor Nairne holds that the Epistle was written at the beginning of the Roman war by a Hellenistic Jew, and is addressed not so much to a given church as to a little company of friends who were tempted to desert their new faith and make common cause with their nation. Confronted with a terrible crisis, they felt that the belief in Jesus as the Messiah was a minor issue; and their friend seeks to keep them within the church by pointing them to the larger and deeper implications of this belief. This he does by considering the life and death of Jesus in their "sacramental" significance. Those aspects of the Gospel history which the common mind was disposed to regard superficially are

brought into the light of the eternal. The earthly life of Jesus is interpreted by the idea of Incarnation; his death on the Cross, by that of an all-sufficing Priesthood. For Professor Nairne the whole secret of the Epistle to the Hebrews is to be sought in its varied applications of the "sacramental principle." Its author was less a theologian or philosopher than one of those minds to which all visible things become the symbols of unseen realities. "He finds a deep spiritual idea of priesthood, of bringing Godward, to be at the heart of all natural life from the beginning of the world, and he marshals his Lord's earthly life on those ascending lines which run up into the will of God. Here is indeed the sacrament of sacraments. In it the visible and the eternal are really one."<sup>1</sup> In the general discussion and the exposition alike Professor Nairne elaborates this conception, and tries to show how it governs the whole thought of the Epistle. The book is a strikingly fresh and original one, informed with a fine religious spirit, and illuminated here and there by real flashes of insight. It is written in a style that is always graceful and interesting, and is relieved, perhaps too frequently, by illustrations from a wide range of literature. From a theological point of view it is suggestive, but to our mind not a little provoking. Professor Nairne makes no real attempt to place the theology of Hebrews in its historical relation to Paulinism, Alexandrianism, Jewish speculation, primitive eschatology. He evades the difficult problems involved in the cardinal doctrine of the priestly intercession in the heavenly sanctuary. He has little to say about the conception of faith which is distinctive of this Epistle. In his account of the "sacramentalism" of Hebrews there is much that has never been better said; but we venture the observation that he clings too fondly to this term, and allows it to warp and obscure his thinking. It is hardly possible to dissociate the term from a certain ecclesiastical type of Christianity; and to describe the writer to the Hebrews as a "sacramentalist" is to identify him with modes of thought which belong to a much later time. Whether consciously or not, Professor Nairne has been at little pains to avoid this confusion. By the use of a misleading term he too often disguises the true character of the symbolism of Hebrews.

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<sup>1</sup> P. 67.